

State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services
Health Standard # 09-1
Routine Preventive Health Care

Replaces Medical Advisory #98-8 and Medical Advisory # 99-2 Family Health History

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this Health Standard is to identify for health care providers, support providers, families/guardians, and persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities those best practice interventions which have been acknowledged to be part of optimal preventive health care and those considerations which are unique to the care of persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

APPLICABILITY: This health standard is applicable to all individuals for whom the department bears direct or oversight responsibility for their medical care. It is to be applied to the planning and coordination of care for persons residing in residential placements and those receiving individual supports.

INTRODUCTION: Routine physical examinations, preventive testing and screenings, immunizations, and wellness education are part of established medical care for the general population. It is important that persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities receive the same preventive health care and wellness education although these persons may pose special needs and risks that expand or temper the recommendations made for the general population. The information contained in this standard is based upon a synthesis of preventive care recommendations made by authoritative organizations for the general population, the expertise of Paul Dolinsky M.D., a consultant to the DDS, and the best practice standards identified by other states.

STANDARD: The minimum preventive care guidelines identified in this document shall serve as the benchmark to assist health care providers, support providers, and advocates for persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities, to identify the interventions that should be provided/ considered by health care practitioners to optimize health care to these persons.

I. Minimum Preventive Care Guidelines

Attachment A of this document, "Minimum Preventive Care Guidelines For Persons With Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities" addresses the following areas:

- a. Preventive health visits
- b. Routine lab work
- c. Health screenings
- d. Cancer screenings
- e. Cardiac screenings
- f. Mental health screening
- g. Infectious disease screenings
- h. Immunizations
- i. Wellness Counseling

II. Health History, Family History, and Social History

- a. The collection, maintenance, revision, and transfer of a person's health history is of critical importance in the care of persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities. This history should include information regarding all health problems and treatments the person has experienced or is currently receiving (i.e., past and present diagnoses, past and present medication regimen, untoward responses to treatment).

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Attachment B, “Health Problem and History List” is an example of a form developed for this purpose.

- b. The collection of information regarding the family health history of the biological parents, siblings and other blood relations of the person will enable a health care provider to target potential health concerns and identify appropriate screenings/actions. This information shall be obtained, as possible, upon admission and updated at least annually. Attachment C, the “Family History” form has previously been identified for this purpose. All unsuccessful attempts to collect this information shall be documented in the person’s medical record.
- c. The collection of additional information significant to the health of the person should be obtained by/provided to the health care provider for use in determining other health risks and further possible screenings. This includes the person’s:
 - 1. Dietary habits and weight status
 - 2. History of tobacco use, alcohol use, and use of illicit substances.
 - 3. Sexual history
 - 4. History of self-injurious behavior or other behavior that may have significant health implications (i.e., PICA, unsafe eating habits/inappropriate acquisition of food)
 - 5. Dental history

III. Modifications/considerations specific to persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities

- a. A person with intellectual/developmental disabilities may present special challenges in cooperating with the recommended preventive health interventions that impact the intended benefit of the procedure. These include:
 - Diminished ability to comprehend the reason for the procedure and the need to cooperate (i.e., maintain position, tolerate preparation, tolerate process, physical disability).
 - Fear/dislike of being touched by another person or an unfamiliar person
 - Fear of testing situation especially those which may require some degree of mild discomfort (i.e., drawing of blood, cleaning of teeth)
- b. Some persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities may require mild sedation to improve their level of comfort and/or cooperation with the health care procedure. Individual consideration of the risk of sedation vs. the benefit of testing should be undertaken by the health care provider in conjunction with the person, guardian/ family and support team. If pre-sedation is ordered, refer to DDS Procedure I.E. PR.006 Pre-Sedation for Medical/Dental Procedures for further information.
- c. In special circumstances when general anesthesia is planned, such as for dental care, it would be desirable to also perform other tests, such as a Pap and pelvic examination or colonoscopy if the person could not cooperate after an oral sedative.

Attachments:

Attachment A, Minimum Preventive Health Care Guidelines for Persons with Intellectual/developmental disabilities

Attachment B, Health Problems and Health History Form (example of format)

Attachment C, Family Health History Form

References:

DMR Medial Advisory #98-8 Routine Preventive Care for Persons with Mental Retardation

Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation Health Screening Recommendations 2003

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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Preventive Health Screening Recommendations

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Other References consulted by Dr. Dolinsky:

Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Disease, www.cdc.gov/nip

American Academy of Family Practice, Recommended Clinical Preventive Services for Women and Men, www.aafp.org

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